

Message Text

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USICA

E.O. 11652: N/A
SUBJ: COUNTRY PLAN INSTRUCTIONS: BILATERAL
COMMUNICATIONS RELATIONSHIP

REF: A. USIA 8784, B. TEHRAN 02550

1. SINCE THE BEGINNING OF THIS CENTURY, IRAN AND THE UNITED STATES DEVELOPED WHAT EACH CONSIDERED TO BE A SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP, CULMINATING IMMEDIATELY AFTER WORLD WAR II WITH A MAJOR COMMITMENT BY THE USG TO IRAN'S TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY. IN RECENT YEARS, ALONG WITH THE EXCEPTIONAL GROWTH IN IRAN'S REGIONAL IMPORTANCE, A CONGRUENCE OF MANY OF IRAN'S NATIONAL GOALS WITH THOSE OF THE UNITED STATES HAS OCCURRED.

2. OVERALL U.S. MISSION GOALS IN IRAN STRESS (1) THE IMPORTANCE OF A CLOSE POLITICAL/ECONOMIC RELATIONSHIP BASED ON TRUST, CONFIDENCE AND MUTUAL RESPECT, (2) AN ENHANCED RELATIONSHIP IN NON-MILITARY FIELDS, (3) A CONTINUING ROLE IN THE MODERNIZATION OF IRAN'S SECURITY FORCES, (4) A BALANCED IRAN POSTURE IN REGIONAL AFFAIRS, (5) AND A CLOSER IDENTITY OF VIEWS ON HUMAN RIGHTS. EFFECTIVE BILATERAL COMMUNICATION IS IMPORTANT TO THE ACHIEVEMENT OF ALL OF THESE GOALS, BUT NUMBERS 1, 2, AND 5 WILL
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PARTICULARLY ENGAGE ICA IN IRAN.

3. AT POLITICAL ELITE LEVELS, U.S.-IRAN COMMUNICATION IS EASED BY THE FACT THAT MANY SUCH IRANIANS ARE LINGUISTICALLY SKILLED, WIDELY TRAVELLED AND HIGHLY EDUCATED (MOSTLY IN THE U.S.). SOURCES OF INFORMATION ABOUT THE UNITED STATES, MOREOVER, ARE READILY AVAILABLE THROUGH LOCAL

MEDIA AND OTHER OUTLETS, NONE OF WHICH SYSTEMATICALLY DISTORTS OR DISPARAGES THE U.S. AND ITS POLICIES. THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE RADIO AND TV ARE VEHICLES FOR USUALLY BENIGN AMERICANA AND ARE AUDITED BY INTERESTED IRANIANS WHOSE TOLERANCE OF CULTURAL IMPORTS REMAINS RELATIVELY HIGH. FACE TO FACE CONTACT WITH AUTHORITATIVE AND KNOWLEDGEABLE AMERICANS IN SPHERES RELEVANT TO MISSION GOALS IS FREQUENT UNDER BOTH USG AND OTHER AUSPICES.

4. IRAN'S ELITE STRATUM, HOWEVER, INCLUDES SIGNIFICANT NUMBERS WHOSE KNOWLEDGE OF ENGLISH IS RUDIMENTARY. MOREOVER DIALOGUE BETWEEN AMERICANS AND OTHER LESS COSMOPOLITAN INFLUENTIALS IS LIMITED FOR BOTH LANGUAGE AND CULTURAL REASONS: ITS ABSENCE COULD PROVE AN ADVERSE FACTOR SHOULD PRESENT UNSETTLED CONDITIONS WORSEN. THE DILEMMA FOR ICA IS HOW AND WHETHER IT CAN COMMUNICATE PURPOSEFULLY WITH AN INCREASINGLY IMPORTANT AUDIENCE UNIVERSE TRADITIONALLY REMOVED FROM USIS ACTIVITY. MEDIUM WAVE AND SHORTWAVE FARSI LANGUAGE BROADCASTS FROM ABROAD ATTRACT THE POLITICALLY CURIOUS AT ALL SOCIAL LEVELS. ICA IS GIVING ATTENTION TO THIS MATTER.

5. THE 60,000 IRANIANS STUDYING AT ALL LEVELS IN THE UNITED STATES CONSTITUTE BOTH A COMMUNICATION ASSET AND LIABILITY. ON THE POSITIVE SIDE, THE CADRE OF PROFESSIONALS IN IRAN

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CONVERSANT WITH AND SYMPATHETIC TO THE U.S. AND ITS WAYS INCREASES GEOMETRICALLY AT THE END OF EACH ACADEMIC YEAR. YET THERE REMAIN IRANIAN STUDENT GHETTOS IN THE U.S. PEOPLED BY THE UNQUALIFIED IN TERMS OF LANGUAGE ABILITY AND CULTURAL RAPPORT. SUPPORTED BY AMERICAN DISSIDENTS, THEY BECOME SPAWNING GROUNDS FOR ANTI-REGIME POLITICAL ACTIVISM--DISINFORMATION TO DISCREDIT THE US/IRAN RELATIONSHIP--RATHER THAN ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT. THE U.S. PRESENCE IN IRAN IS ALSO MIXED IN TERMS OF BENEFIT. THERE ARE SOME 50 FORMAL UNIVERSITY AFFILIATIONS BETWEEN IRAN AND THE U.S., ABOUT 250 AMERICAN EDUCATORS ON THE FACULTIES OF IRAN'S MAJOR UNIVERSITIES AND SCORES MORE IN THEIR TRAINING INSTITUTIONS. THE TOTAL RESIDENT AMERICAN PRESENCE IN IRAN APPROACHES 40,000, MAINLY BUSINESS PEOPLE BUT INCLUDING SIGNIFICANT NUMBERS OF BLUE COLLAR CONTRACT

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PERSONNEL. WHILE TENSIONS ARE INEVITABLE GIVEN CULTURAL ADJUSTMENT PROBLEMS, THE SITUATION HAS BEEN MORE THAN MANAGEABLE. CULTURAL ADJUSTMENT AND PERSONAL SECURITY PROBLEMS MAY INCREASE, HOWEVER WITH THE ANTICIPATED INFLUX OF ADDITIONAL AMERICANS AND A WORSENING OF THE ENVIRONMENT WHICH IN TEHRAN INCLUDES CHAOTIC TRAFFIC, POLLUTION, SOCIAL SERVICE LACKS, AND INCREASED EXTREMIST ACTIVITY. IN LINE WITH MISSION GOALS, ICA IS ADDRESSING CERTAIN OF THE ABOVE PROBLEMS THROUGH COUNSELING, ENGLISH TEACHING, AND ORIENTATION PROGRAMS FOR IRANIAN STUDENTS. UNDER ICA'S NEW MUTUALITY MANDATE PROGRAMS WILL BE DEVELOPED TO FOSTER MORE ACCURATE UNDERSTANDING AMONG AMERICANS HERE AND IN THE U.S. OF MODERN IRAN.

6. ANOTHER SOURCE OF UNDERLYING TENSION IN THE COMMUNICATIONS RELATIONSHIP, NOT SUSCEPTIBLE TO ICA TREATMENT, IS WHAT ONE AMERICAN ACADEMIC HAS DESCRIBED AS A QUOTE PERCEPTIBLE DISCONTENT AMONG MIDDLE CLASS PROFESSIONALS WITH THE PATRIMONIAL BASIS OF POLITICS IN IRAN UNQUOTE. THIS HAS PROMPTED MANY THOUGHTFUL IRANIANS TO ASPIRE TO PERMANENT RESIDENCY IN THE U.S. ESCAPE VALVES FOR DISCONTENT ARE IN EVIDENCE, HOWEVER. MEDIA RESTRAINTS HAVE BEEN EASED. DESPITE DISORDERS, THE SHAH HAS MADE CLEAR HE WILL NOT REVERSE LIBERALIZATION MEASURES. IRAN'S ENFORCED
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EVOLUTION TOWARDS GREATER DECENTRALIZATION OF THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESS SHOULD BE AMELIORATIVE. AS IRAN MODERNIZES, NEW FORCES AND GROUPS ARE EVOLVING INTO IMPORTANT CENTERS OF INFLUENCE. A MISSION GOAL TO ASSESS THIS PHENOMENON WILL DIRECTLY ENGAGE ICA IN DETERMINING THE UTILITY OF ITS EXISTING MIX OF PRODUCTS, PROGRAMS, AND RANGE OF CONTACTS.

7. MILITARY MODERNIZATION, IMPLEMENTATION OF ECONOMIC PLANS, OIL PRICE DECISION TAKING, AND REGIONAL AND INTERNAL SECURITY CONCERNS ARE PREOCCUPATIONS WHICH SUBSTANTIVELY INVOLVE A VERY LIMITED IRANIAN POLITICAL ELITE WHO HAVE DIRECT ACCESS TO AUTHORITATIVE U.S. PERSONALITIES AND INFORMATION. SUCH ACCESS, HOWEVER, DOES NOT EASILY PERSUADE IRAN'S INNER CIRCLE, AND HENCE A WIDER STRATUM OF INFLUENTIALS, AS TO THE VALIDITY OF U.S. POLICIES. THE USG SYSTEM OF CHECKS AND BALANCES, ADMIRERD IN THEORY, BLURS THE U.S. IMAGE AS A RELIABLE ALLY IN MEETING PRESSING INTERNATIONAL AND DOMESTIC ISSUES (E.G, HORN OF AFRICA, ARMS SALES, ENERGY LEGISLATION). IRANIAN ARE ENCOURAGE TO BELIEVE THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION'S EMPHASIS ON HUMAN RIGHTS IS MISPLACED GIVEN THE PRIMACY THE SHAH ASSIGNS TO MEETING HUMAN NEEDS. CERTAIN NORTH/ SOUTH ECONOMIC ISSUES ARE VIEWED DISSIMILARLY WITH IRAN UNCRITICALLY SUBSCRIBING TO THE WORLD ECONOMIC ORDER CONCEPT. ICA WILL FOSO-WAY DIALOGUE ON THIS CLUSTER OF TOPICL ISSUES THROUGH SPEAKER PROGRAMS, EXCHANGE PROJECTS AND INFORMATION PLACEMENT.

8. THERE ARE IMPORTANT SUBJECT AREAS WHERE ICA-SUPPORTED U.S.-IRANIAN COMMUNICATION OVER THE LONGER TERM CAN ENHANCE THE BASIC RELATIONSHIP PER MISSION GOALS 1, AND 2. THESE ARE FIELDS WHERE THE U.S. EXPERIENCE AND TENDENCIES ARE UNCLASSIFIED

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RLEVANT TO BOTH COUNTRY'S INTERESTS AND NEEDS. THEY INCLUDE, IN PRIORITY ORDER, CHALLENGES CONFRONTING BOTH COUNTRIES IN THE FIELDS OF EDUCATION, ENERGY, AND URBAN AFFAIRS; ISSUES INVOLVED IN THE FREE FLOW OF INFORMATION; IRANIAN INTEREST IN AMERICAN STUDIES/ENGLISH PROFICIENCY; INCREASED AWARENESS OF IRAN BY U.S. MEDIA AND SCHOLARS; AND MUTUAL RECEPTIVITY TO ACHIEVEMENTS IN THE FINE ARTS. BNC'S IN TEHRAN AND THE PROVINCES WILL BE THE FOCAL POINTS FOR MUCH OF ICA PROGRAMMING IN THESE AREAS. SHELLENBERGER

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